Towards a better Tomorrow

To the Residents of the Northwest Territories

The 14th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories has taken office at a very exciting and dynamic time. We face enormous challenges and unprecedented opportunities.

An important step towards seizing the opportunities and achieving a better future is starting with a framework. As the 19 Members of the 14th Legislative Assembly, representing all the residents of the NWT, we have developed a framework to provide broad strategic direction to the Government of the Northwest Territories. This will guide our activities over the next four years. *"Towards a Better Tomorrow"* sets out:

- a vision for a prosperous future;
- priorities that we will focus our attention on;
- goals that we hope to accomplish; and
- a plan, showing how we propose to get there.

Over the past three months, we have worked to map out a new path for the Northwest Territories. We are now ready to share with you a plan of what we need to accomplish. We have chosen a few key priorities to invest our energies in.

We know from experience that if we make everything a priority, then nothing is. There is not much time and lots to do, but we are confident that if we all work in partnership, we can meet our goals. This framework will guide the government's priorities and allocation of resources.

We will consider your input, build on the framework and develop a comprehensive action plan. The action plan should be seen as a living document, taking into consideration our changing environment. It will form the basis upon which you can hold us accountable. This is an important part of being a more open and transparent government.

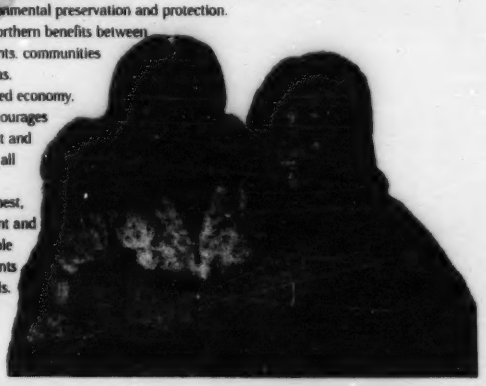
Bill Braden Steven Nitah Joe Handley

Our Vision for a Prosperous Future

To reach our full potential as people of the Northwest Territories, we need to build upon a common vision and work in partnership towards a vibrant, prosperous and unified territory that we can all be proud of. Our vision should reflect our values and should describe the kind of future that we all would like to see – for ourselves, our families and our territory.

We propose the following as a vision that all Northerners can share.

- A strong, unified and self-reliant Northwest Territories that can take its rightful place in the federation and international community.
- Aboriginal and other northern leaders working together in support of a common vision and strong sense of identity.
- Strong partnerships with aboriginal, federal, provincial and territorial governments.
- Self-reliant, healthy, well educated individuals, families and communities doing their part in improving the quality of their own lives.
- A motivated young generation prepared to take advantage of the opportunities the North has to offer.
- Safety, security and respect for all citizens, with a focus on women, children, elders and persons with disabilities.
- Respect for the diversity of cultures and languages in the Northwest Territories.
- Recognition of and respect for both the collective and individual rights of all Northerners.
- Aboriginal people having greater self-determination over their social, cultural and political destiny.
- An improved quality of life for aboriginal peoples.
- Resource development that balances economic benefit, social impacts and environmental preservation and protection.
- Sharing northern benefits between governments, communities and regions.
- A diversified economy, which encourages investment and growth in all sectors.
- Open, honest, transparent and accountable governments at all levels.



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Priorities — *where we will invest our energies*

Priorities are the areas that we choose to target first for improvement. They flow from the vision and reflect the things that we value. Considering the many opportunities and challenges facing the NWT, it is tempting to make everything a priority. However, we need to be selective when considering our priorities because if everything is a priority, then all things are equal and nothing is a priority.

Government alone cannot make progress on these priorities – we have to work together with other governments, with the private sector, and with you – the people of the NWT. Change won't happen overnight, but we can make a difference if we devote our energies to the following four key priorities for the next four years.

We propose the following four key priorities for the next four years:

1. Self-reliant individuals, families and communities, working with governments, toward improving social wellbeing.
2. Better governance through partnerships.
3. A northern-controlled economy that is balanced, diversified, stable and vibrant.
4. Adequate resources helping all levels of government to become more self-reliant in meeting the needs of the people they serve.

Strategies — *how we will get there*

Strategies support the priorities and describe how we achieve the goals. The following list outlines five broad strategies:

1. Promoting healthy lifestyle choices.
   - Support and enhance the role of the family.
   - Improve child protection.
   - Reduce family violence.
   - Raise awareness of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and the risks of unhealthy choices.
   - Emphasize the value of investing in early childhood development, focusing on the needs of mothers and families.
   - Improve accountability and linkages across the social safety net, including health, social services, education, housing and justice.
2. Fostering mutually respectful and cooperative partnerships with aboriginal governments.
   - Establish a clear framework for working with aboriginal governments, through such mechanisms as intergovernmental forums.
   - Support the negotiation and implementation of claims and self-government agreements.
   - Participate in regional political accords.
   - Cooperate on capacity building at the community and regional levels.
3. Ensuring that there is an effective, efficient system of government that is accountable to the people it serves.
   - Improve accountability (processes for transparency and openness of government).
   - Increase the opportunities for public participation in the business of the Legislature.
   - Complete a review on how we, as a government, do business, including boards and agencies.
   - Update human rights legislation.
   - Advance constitutional and electoral matters.
4. Anticipating and maximizing economic and career opportunities for northern people.
   - Link jobs with specific education and training in partnership with the private sector.
   - Improve the quality and relevance of the education system.
   - Promote a positive investment climate by streamlining the regulatory regime and completing a Northern Accord.
   - Improve government policies related to economic development.
   - Pursue value-added industry in all resource sectors.
   - Promote export of tourism products and services.
   - Ensure communities and regions get a fair share of economic opportunities.
   - Balance environmental considerations with social impacts and economic development.
5. Increasing revenue to ensure that all governments meet the needs of the people.
   - Pursue northern control over northern resources – for example, through a Northern Accord.
   - Get support for royalty advance/resource revenue sharing arrangements.
   - Review options regarding flow-through shares.
   - Review options related to revenue initiatives and privatization.
   - Pursue partnership arrangements to help build infrastructure.

Key Goals — *what our targets are*

The goals that we set allow us to measure what we have accomplished what we set out to do – they are the results that we need to achieve to know that we have succeeded.

Our ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life for all people in the NWT; however, it is something that government does not have complete control over. For example, community and aboriginal governments, and various boards and agencies all have a role to play in governing and providing services. We can create a positive investment climate, however, the extent to which resource developers do business in the North is not entirely in our hands.

As well, the personal actions and choices of all NWT citizens play a major role in social conditions. No matter what quality of schooling is available, a child will not learn unless he or she attends school. No matter how many training opportunities and jobs are created, if people don't, or can't, take advantage of them, there will still be unemployment. No matter the quality of health care, if people continue to smoke and drink they will continue to get sick and die.

We will commit to do our part to help achieve these goals. The rest is up to our partners, other governments and businesses, and you, the people of the Northwest Territories.

The four key goals are:

1. Healthy, educated Northerners making responsible personal choices for themselves and their families.

   In the shorter term, the results we look for include:
   - communities having "one-stop shopping" access to a comprehensive network of support programs for community-based wellness;
   - housing that is adequate, affordable and suitable; and
   - public funds assisting those who can't help themselves.

   In the longer term, the results we want to see include:
   - babies who are born healthy and stay that way;
   - children developing a loving and stable relationship with parents or other caregivers;
   - people free from preventable diseases, such as those resulting from alcohol and tobacco use; and
   - elders who are well supported by their community and able to live independently.

2. Strong and effective aboriginal and public governments operating cooperatively with no reduction in program and service levels as a result of implementing self-government agreements.

   In the shorter term, results we would like to see include:
   - enough resources available to support government operations and investments; and
   - enough funding available to all governments to implement self-government arrangements.

   In the longer term, the results that would support this goal include:
   - public and aboriginal governments sharing control over land, water and resources, and receiving an appropriate share of resource royalties;
   - northern governments working together co-operatively through a permanent process, such as the Intergovernmental Forum;
   - an appropriate balance of authority and responsibility among territorial, aboriginal, regional, and community governing structures;
   - all residents sharing a sense of unity and pride in our territory; and
   - maximum value for money achieved by all governments through streamlined and efficient structures.

3. A healthy and diversified economy providing employment opportunities for Northerners in all communities.

   In the shorter term, some results we would like to see include:
   - people having the skills necessary to enter the workforce or go on to higher education;
   - post-secondary education and training that meets the needs of northern residents and northern employers; and
   - more businesses starting and/or choosing to locate in the Northwest Territories.

   In the longer term, results that would support this goal include:
   - increased northern control over northern development;
   - Northerners making career choices that suit their lifestyle and personal priorities; and
   - value-added opportunities increasing the NWT's economic diversity.

4. An effective balance between development of our resources, socio-economic impacts, and preservation and protection of our natural environment.

   In the shorter term, some results we would like to see include:
   - a greater role for GNWT and aboriginal governments in setting resource policies and making decisions;
   - environmental protection commitments and socio-economic considerations that are built into every resource development initiative; and
   - a streamlined regulatory regime, developed in partnership with aboriginal and other governments, that encourages balanced development.

   In the longer term, the results we want to see include:
   - northern control over land, water and resources in order to ensure that northern priorities shape resource development, guide environmental protection and anticipate social and economic impacts; and
   - northern governments using revenues raised from resource development in the NWT, thus reducing dependence on federal transfers.

What We Need From You

The future of the NWT is bright but it will be up to all of us to take advantage of the opportunities and improve the quality of life for all citizens. We need to work together to overcome the challenges we all face, to find a common vision and make the vision a reality.

"We" means all of us, working in partnership with other governments, communities, regions, families and individuals, because the territorial government cannot accomplish this alone. That's why it is important that we develop a shared, common vision and work together to put our framework into action. This requires hearing from you and getting your input to see if we are on the right track.

Let us know what you think. *"Towards a Better Tomorrow"* will be distributed widely and we encourage you to take the time to share your thoughts with us.

Contact your local MLA or any Member of the Legislative Assembly by phone, fax, mail or e-mail, with any ideas you might have.

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If you would like this information in another official language, call us.

Si vous voulez ces informations en français, contactez-nous.

Kiagin ki nitawihtin ê nihiyawihk ôma ācimôwin, tipwāsinān.

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We *means all of us, working in partnership.*